

The Disappointment and the Glory

John 17

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This is the third week preaching from John 17, this amazing prayer that Jesus prays for us right before He is crucified.

We've already read the whole prayer, so today I hope to go back and pull some of the pieces together and point to something we've only touched on. Two weeks ago, we talked about God's dream, and our dreams, and how our dreams attack God's dream. And we watched some of the Stepford Wives and said we dream of Stepford church because in Stepford church nobody bleeds.

Last week we talked about diversity in unity, which bears testimony to that which unifies, and we watched some Star Trek and talked about the Borg. The Borg is a cybernetic organism that unifies by taking away freedom. We also watched a clip of a musical and said God is like a dance that unifies by setting people free.

And then we read this verse:

John 17:23

I in them (says Jesus in his prayer) and you in me (think about that) that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

So let's pray.

Prayer

Father, in Jesus' Name, we think we agree with that prayer and so would you make us one, even perfectly one, as you are one so that the world might know and that world might believe. And Father would you help us to understand at least a little bit how you do it so that when you do it, we wouldn't complain too much or quit the program? In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

"Hallelujah Chorus" Flash Mob Clip

People are eating in a food court.

A prelude to the "Hallelujah Chorus" starts (just organ music)

A woman holding a cell phone up to her ear stands up and in a beautiful voice begins to sing: "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Halle-e-lujah."

People watch. A young man stands up on a chair, following the woman and also sings: "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Halle-e-lujah."

Two more join in, then three, then several more of various ages and genders, until an entire choir of people is singing the "Hallelujah Chorus" in unison.

Several watch and enjoy, some hold hands, some smiling, some get tears in their eyes.

At the end the entire choir is singing and raising their hands.

Isn't that cool? Have you seen that? It was going around the internet; it was all over the place. It was this flash mob last Christmas at the Welland Seaway Mall in Ontario, Canada. All these people just started standing up. I mean they had rehearsed in advance. It was a choir and started singing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

George Friedrich Handel wrote the 'Hallelujah Chorus.' I don't know if you know this though, he actually stole the lyrics from The Revelation of Saint John—John, the same guy that wrote John 17, which we've been preaching through this last month.

"Hallelujah" means "Praise God" from two Hebrew words: *Hallel* and *Yahweh*. It means "Praise Yahweh". It means "Praise God," "Glory to God," or quite literally, "Shine God." Hallelujah.

In Revelation 5 John sees Every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the seas and all that is in them joining together in this song of praise to God over something that they see on the throne. The song never stops so as the vision progresses, John still hears the choir of all creation as breaks into the drama of space and time as we know it.

In Chapter 11, John hears the kingdoms of this world, the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever. In chapter 9, the choir sings, *"Hallelujah to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords."*

So you see what happened at the Welland Seaways Mall last Christmas was an outbreak or an *in*-break of the Kingdom of Heaven into this world of space and time as we know it. What happened at the Welland Seaways Mall was church: *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

You know, no one person can sing the Hallelujah Chorus. I know that because I tried, and it didn't work. The "Hallelujah Chorus" is this amazing diversity of voices brought into this beautiful unity by that which inspires it—a vision—a logic—a *Logos*.

Well Jesus prays, *"Make them one, Father, as we are one that the world may believe and know."* "Make them know."

Diversity in unity bears testimony to that which unifies.

Diversity in unity is a symphony bearing testimony to its author,

A symphony bearing testimony to the composer, the conductor.

It's a party bearing witness to the host.

It's a marriage bearing witness to a covenant of love.

It's a living body bearing witness to life.

Diversity in unity is a church.

Diversity in unity is God, three persons, one substance, and the substance is love.

God is Love.

When we're united in love, our diversity is no longer a threat but a blessing. Do you ever feel threatened by diversity? By that I don't mean just that people are different. Do you ever feel threatened by other people's gifts, for instance? That other people are gifted in some way that you are not.

You know, I've always complained to God (some call it prayer, but probably a better word is complaining). I've complained to God that others had these cool prophetic gifts, you know. Visions, words, and knowledge, and stuff and I didn't. One day, I remember I was praying to God and I said, "God, you know, all my life I've asked you that I could see visions. And I've never seen one vision. And Susan, my wife, she hardly ever reads her Bible and you just give her all these visions. She gets visions. How come she has visions and I don't have visions?"

And I think I got an answer, not in a vision, but I had this very clear thought: "Peter, you ask, 'How come Susan has visions and I don't?'" Answer: "For the same reason that she has a uterus and breasts and you don't. Would you like some?" "No! I mean yes! No! I mean Yes! But not like that."

You see, in reality, according to God I already have a uterus, breasts, and a nice hour-glass figure because twenty-eight years ago Susan and I entered into a covenant and celebrated communion, and God said, "Behold the two have become one flesh, one body." And check this out. The joy isn't just that I have parts that I didn't have before. The joy is exchanging those parts and knowing another.

Now, if that doesn't happen in freedom, you know what it's called? Rape. But in the covenant of marriage, communion in the covenant of marriage, it's life. Actually, it's an outbreak of the "Hallelujah Chorus." And if that troubles you, read Genesis 2 and Ephesians 5, and you'll see that I didn't think that up.

That's not my dream. That's God's dream. It's a good one.

I used to be jealous of my friend Andrew's gift of evangelism. It's really something to see. But now if some insinuates: "Hey, Peter, Andrew Trawick is a better evangelist than you," I've learned to say, "No he isn't. He's not a better evangelist than me, he is me. We are one body, the Body of Christ, bound by covenant blood."

And if someone says, "Hey Peter, Alan plays better guitar than you;" I can say, "Hey, Alan doesn't play better guitar than me, Alan is me." And Mark is not funnier than me, he is me. And Susan doesn't see more visions than me. She is me. Susan is me. Mark, Alan, and Andrew are all me. And yet, of course, they're not me. And that's why I like hanging out with them so much because if they were all completely me, then hanging out with them would simply be hanging out with me, and I'd be lonely and bored because one person cannot sing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

See the greatest gift is not possessing all the gifts but together offering all the gifts. And that's the "Hallelujah Chorus." God is three persons, one substance. Church is many persons, one substance—many persons united in the freedom of Love and that's the great dance.

So last week, we showed a video of a great dance and talked about how it bore testimony to the music that made the dancers one. And if you didn't hear the music, you'd try to listen for the music because you could see that they were one. And then I told you about all the diverse believers that joined hands and sang Christmas carols together in Romania sparking the Romanian Revolution, which toppled the Communist dictator, the Borg, in Romania. And then to end the service, we sang "We are one in the Spirit" and "They will know we are Christians by our love."

After the Saturday service up on the hill, at the end of that song, a friend came up to me and he said, "You know, Peter, during that last song, I almost laughed." And you see, I could totally relate to his comment. But not just laugh, but cry. Cry, because, if in fact, we are one like that song says, "We are one is the Spirit." If in fact, we are one, boy it's rather disappointing, don't you think?

Actually, driving home after the service last Saturday night, I felt kind of embarrassed and ashamed. And to be honest, something of a failure, and yet all that stuff I preached last week and so far this week, it's true. It's really true; I mean I've really seen it and I've tasted it. Right here, I've really tasted it, tasted it. It's true and yet it's not always true in us.

Perfect in one as we are one, said Jesus. Not hardly. It's God's beautiful dream, but I live in this painful reality and the beauty of the dream makes the wound of reality that much more severe. You see it's precisely because the "Hallelujah Chorus" is so incredibly beautiful that is so painful when it stops. And in this world, it stops and leaves a wound, a painful longing. It stops, and everyone goes back to eating their own curly fries and bickering over what they're gonna have for dessert. It stops.

And you see, if you thought marriage was just about getting a roommate. I mean if you didn't have a great dream of marriage or didn't see God's dream of marriage, if you thought marriage was just about getting a roommate, it wouldn't hurt so much, would it? But you've tasted ecstasy, and it left a wound, and now you just can't settle for a roommate.

If you thought church was just Rotary Club or the PTA it wouldn't hurt so much would it? But you've tasted communion, and now it feels like a wound, and the wound pesters you at every committee meeting....Is this it? Shakespeare wrote, "It's better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all," but sometimes we wonder.

Three times in the Song of Solomon, Solomon wrote this, "*I adjure you O daughters of Jerusalem, do not awaken love until it's time.*" You see in *this* world, love *hurts*. And so why does the Great Bridegroom awaken it at all?

Church was my family as a kid. It was there that, honestly, Jesus awakened my heart, and then my dad got fired. Youth group was my home in high school, and then my youth pastor got fired. In California, I fell in love with two churches, and the two senior pastors were sexually abusing people in their churches. I really loved my last church and it blew up. I mean it was like the "Hallelujah Chorus," and then it just stopped.

You know sometimes, God's dream is just so beautiful that we try to possess it; we try to control it; we try to own it as our own, but then it's no longer God's dream, but our dream and God's dream dies. You see, to control the dream is to become the Borg. And the Borg cannot sing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

One Sunday, I complained publicly that I had never seen visions and Pam Rentor prayed for me in the service and she heard God say: "I didn't give Peter all that he asked of me because if I had, he wouldn't need my church; he wouldn't love my church. My church is all in all. One of the distinguishing marks of the anti Christ is that he will be all in himself. In other words, he will be the Borg. And I guess I kinda want to be the Borg. You see, each one of us wants to be the Borg. That's the problem. Each wants to be the Borg and assimilate God's dream and everybody else's dreams into our own. But He's the dreamer. And we are His dream.

So anyway, we try to hijack God's dream and yet even *that* is part of his dream. You see, even though we wreck the "Hallelujah Chorus" with our self-centered dreams, God has arranged for the chorus to end at least in this world. It's like He gives us a taste and then takes it away. Gives us a taste and then takes it away, and picks at the wound over and over and over so it doesn't form a scab. Gives us a taste, takes it away, picks at the wound, and remember church is God's people. The church is your marriage, your family, your friends, your relationships, each this great dream—that leaves a wound.

We all receive wounds from broken relationships. We all do. For in this world, all relationships are broken. So, it's tempting, in this world, to give up on relationships and just bury the wound.

We say stuff like:

"I don't know if it was him or me; I don't know if it was her; I don't know whose fault it was; I just know that it really, really hurt. It just hurts too much and so I'm gonna have to quit. I'm gonna have to leave."

"I don't know the reason but my small group is painful."

"My house church is painful."

"Church is just too painful, I have to leave."

I can't tell you the number of times I pray, "God, church is too painful, and I feel like a fool. Sometimes even like a fraud and I want to stop." And He says, "Don't stop, don't stop preaching my Word. Don't stop."

In high school, I tried out for the concert choir as a joke. No kidding, my friend Dave got me to try out as a joke. And I made it because they were just desperate for basses or something. But I really had a hard time singing on key. And my only hope for singing on key was to sing really loud. But if I sang really loud, then I could fail really loud and that would hurt really loud, and so I just didn't sing.

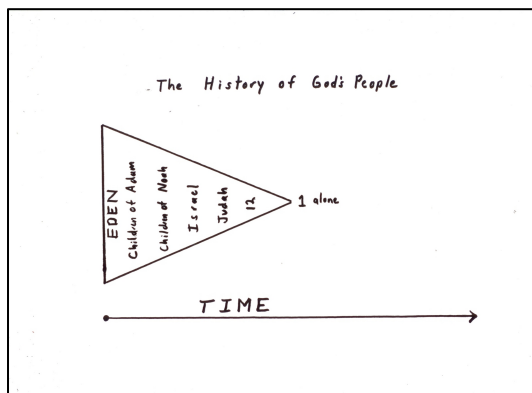
Sometimes we think it's better to just not sing, to just not love, to just not even hope for love, to just not sing. But if you won't sing, you cannot sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" and then you're stuck in hell. The only place safe from the danger of love is hell.

So anyway, last Saturday night I felt a little tempted by hell. That night, talking to Susan, I said something like this, “You know God’s dream for church, that stuff Jesus prays in John 17, is so good, and it’s so beautiful. It’s so amazing that preaching it makes me feel like a fool or a fraud.”

I thought of all the pain in thirty-five years of pastoring churches— from Bible studies, to youth groups, to big congregations, and I think I just felt the wound and I thought maybe I should just stop singing. And out loud I said to Susan, “I feel like such a failure.” And she said, “Well Peter, what do you think it was like for Jesus that night when He prayed that prayer?” You know, Jesus’ prayer in John 17 is the most beautiful, glorious dream of community that you will ever encounter. But He prayed it the very moment it appeared most foolish and appeared to be the greatest failure of all time.

Up until this night, the history of God’s church (the *ecclesia*, the people called out) had been the history of brief periods of glorious community punctuating an unceasing slide into complete and total collapse—failure.

Theologian Oscar Cullman used to diagram it like this:



In the beginning, you’ll see there on the left, the beginning of time, God’s community, the covenant community—the people that He dealt with...

Were the children of Adam. And that community failed.

And then, the children of Noah, in another covenant, and that community failed.

And then the children of Israel, the covenant community, and that failed.

And then the children of Judah and that failed.

And then the twelve.

This chart represents complete, total, and massive church failure until on this night, just before Jesus prays, John 17, John 16:32; He says “*This night you will all leave me alone.*”

And I think behind those eleven, by that point, or those twelve, was that entire triangle, all those people, “*You will all leave me alone.*” The dream had shrunk to one.

In the morning, his church, the chosen people of Israel, and indeed all humanity will have him crucified. It's our sins and our selfish dreams that nail him to the tree, and yet Jesus still dreams God's dream and He doesn't seem to think that He's a failure. In fact, Jesus starts talking about glory!

You know, through Isaiah, God said, *"I am the Lord and I share my glory with no one."* And yet Jesus begins his prayer in John 17 by saying this:

Father, The hour has come; glorify your son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him (Eternal life—remember the life is in the blood, eternal life, maybe that comes from eternal blood) and this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Remember, a couple weeks ago, we asked that question, "What glory is that? What's that glory? Glory the disciples had not seen. Yet glory that Jesus had with the Father before the world existed. And yet glory that He was just about to receive that night or in the morning.

Well check this out: In John, Jesus is pictured as enthroned upon his cross, remember that? Glorified on his cross. John 12:32: *"When I am lifted up..."* speaking of his cross. *"When I'm lifted up, I will draw all people unto myself."* And John writes that He was crucified *"from the foundation of the world."* His cross is the point that eternity touches time. And remember what Jesus first showed his disciples He rose from the dead and appeared unto them in his glorified body. Remember? His wounds. His glory is His wounds, from which flows blood that is life, eternal life.

You remember the multitude singing the "Hallelujah Chorus" in the Revelation. They're all united by something. They're all looking at something—something that John had seen that very night and what John would return to see in the morning. To the best of our ability to portray such incredible glory, this is what all creatures are looking at as they sing the "Hallelujah Chorus: in the Revelation. They're looking at this:

Passion Clip

[At the Last Supper as Jesus and his disciples take the Passover meal.]

Jesus: *This is my body which is given up for you.*

As Jesus lifts up the bread, the scene changes to Jesus being lifted up on a cross. John, his disciple watches, at the foot of the cross, and tears fill his eyes. The scene changes back to the Last Supper. Jesus pours the wine and picks up the cup and drinks from it.

Jesus: *Take this and drink. This is my blood of the new covenant.* (He passes the cup to John), *which is given for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

The scene changes to the crucifixion. John looks at Jesus' brutally beaten body and his blood stained arms. Blood drips down off of his hands and arms onto the cross.

As all creation sings the “Hallelujah Chorus,”
They’re looking at the throne and on the throne a Lamb, as if He had been slain,
And from the throne issues a river.
It’s a river of life, and the life is in the blood.
The blood is mercy that we drink like wine.
And the blood is judgment poured from that bowls of wrath,
Those seven bowls of wrath,
And it forms a river that fills the land to the depths of a horse’s bridal.
The blood is God’s life freely given.
It pours from the wounds, which are the glory of God.
The glory of God is the glory of Love and God is Love and this is Love, writes John,
God gave Jesus!

And Jesus did this: He took bread and He broke it saying, “This is my body given to you, wounded for you. And in the same manner, He took the cup and He said, “This cup is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. I bleed for you.”

You know, John’s gospel is the only gospel that doesn’t include those words of institution that we say every time we have communion. I think that’s because John believes that *all* the words are words of institution. Communion is *everything* in the gospel of John and communion is even the basis of all creation in the Revelation, and even in Genesis.

But anyway, on the night that Jesus consecrates communion, John records Jesus as praying, “I consecrate myself.” Verse 19.

And then in verse 21

...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them...

Did you get that? “*The glory that you have given to me, I have given to them,*” What has He just given them? His body broken, his blood shed, life poured out from wounds—wounds that He would receive on the cross, in the morning.

...that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

It’s his glory that makes us one and his glory is his life poured out.
Love’s life poured out.
His glory is grace.
And we are to drink it.
It makes us one. Many persons, one substance, and that substance is Love.
We drink the very “Life Blood” of God, who is Love.

You know, bleeding unifies a body. Remember we talked about that. If a wound is perfectly connected to another wound in the body, we really don't call it a wound. We call it a joint or a connection.

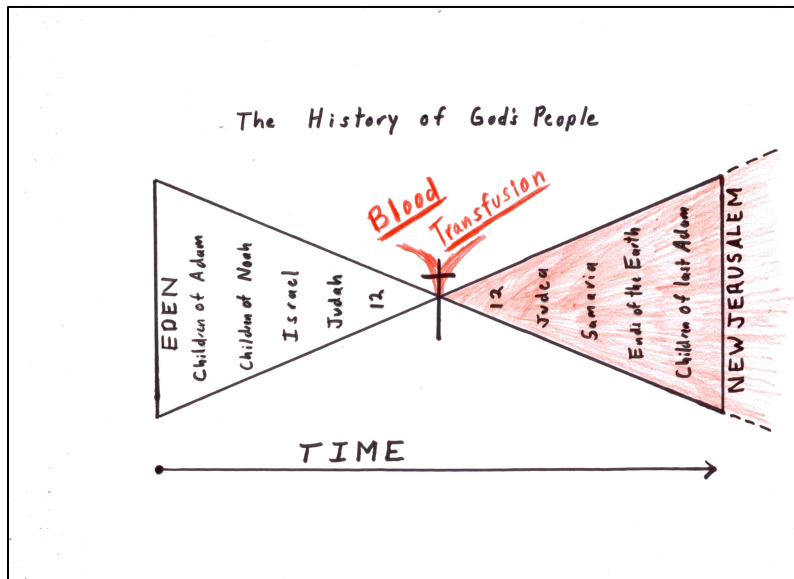
As we preached a healthy body constantly bleeds. One part bleeds into another and that part into another. I mean that's how you know that a body is alive. If the blood stops circulating, well that body is dead, or at least the part that it ceases to circulate to is dead. A body has many parts and one circulating substance: blood. Christ's body is many members and one circulating substance: His love.

When only one member loves, when only one bleeds, it looks like death and hurts like crucifixion. But when all members love and give life one to another, bleed life one into the other, it feels like heaven because it is heaven. It's the body fully alive; it's the "Hallelujah Chorus."

We know the night Jesus prayed John 17, the entire world refused to love and it was his Bride that took his life. On the cross, we took his life and yet He gave his life, he forgave his life. So the place of our greatest shame reveals the greatest glory, and that glory of grace transforms our shame into worship, actually, the "Hallelujah Chorus," as we join in the song and sing, "By your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe, tongue, people and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

On the cross Jesus gets the bleeding started; Jesus gets the grace started.
On the cross, He infuses creation with the Life of Love.

Oscar Cullmon finishes his diagram something like this:



See that? Blood transfusion. The community of God, the Old Covenant is a complete failure—many persons, no substance—until the people of God crucify God in flesh and then He bleeds and He begins to fill his people; He begins to fill his temple; He begins to fill his Sanctuary with glory.

In the Revelation, his sanctuary, which is his temple, which is his people, which is the New Jerusalem, which is Bride, when she comes down from heaven, Scripture says she has the glory of God.

In Isaiah God says, *"I am the Lord, I give my Glory to no other."*

But you see, she is not another. She is His very body, the Body of Christ, many members, one substance. She is his Bride like two persons and one substance. God is three persons and one substance.

Jesus prayed, *"You in me and I in them."* "Your love in me and I in them." You see, I think God is loving us right into the very interior of the Trinity.

Scripture says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

God the Father suffers as He offers His Son.

God the Son suffers as He surrenders His life.

God the Spirit suffers as He descends into our darkness.

Once, in worship, my wife had this vision of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. She saw them sitting on thrones in a row and they had their arms on the armrests of each throne in such a way that one hand would overlap with the other hand, the hand next to it. And each hand was fused from the top to bottom with one wound. Each joined at the wound and so she looked at it like this: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

You see, I think, if we saw it truly, as if from above, they would form a triangle and each would be connected to the other by a spike through a wound. And inside the triangle would be us.

Jesus prayed, "Glorify me with the glory I had with you Father before the world existed." I suspect that that glory is a wound, a wound that bleeds. It bleeds the Life of Love. It often hurts in this world, but it turns to ecstasy in the next. In fact, it transforms this world into the next. It fills it with glory and that love, that glory, changes everything.

It changes differences from liabilities into assets

It changes sex from rape into a sacrament of communion

It changes business from robbery into ministry

It changes society from a prison into a party...

where everyone is not taking, but everyone is giving

It changes the collective from the Borg into the church

It changes Old Jerusalem into New Jerusalem

It changes the Great Harlot into the Bride of Christ

It transforms this fallen creation into the "Hallelujah Chorus."

Well the Glory of God is a wound on the Body of Christ.

And Christ gets wounds from his people, His Bride.

And He gets them that night when He prays John 17.

And so you see, the Bride is the source of his wounds...

And yet his Bride is the joy set before him.

And so for her, he gladly bleeds.

Jesus prayed, *"Make them one."* Why did He pray, "Make them one?" Well, because obviously, they were not one. Scripture says that that night, the disciples were all fighting over who got to be the Borg, who got to be the greatest. He prays, *"Lord make them one, Father, make them one."* But then He prayed, *"I have given them the glory that you have given to me."*

You know, for the last three and a half years, I've been seeing a counselor, David Hensen, a guy in this church, a great guy, who just offered to meet with me. I see him once a month and mostly we process feelings associated with some wounds that I've received from the church over the years—wounds of broken and painful relationships, and we all have those wounds, we all have them.

Well, last Tuesday, David walked me through this little exercise. He had me imagine myself in a safe and peaceful place. And so I imagined myself on this great beach that I visited once on the Island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas. Quiet, still, beautiful, I'm walking along the beach alone. And then he said, "Peter, now imagine Jesus." And so I did. I imagined him walking to me kinda on the water like you'd expect. And then he said, "Peter, now ask him the question that troubles you." And without a pause, "It just came right out of mouth, at least in my mind, I said, "Jesus, Jesus, am I a failure?"

Immediately, this is what I saw. Now I don't know how much is my imagination, but I believe that I imagined what's true. I said, "Jesus, am I a failure?" and He just started laughing. I mean I don't know, but maybe that's like a funny question in the land where He comes from. I said, "Jesus, am I a failure?" He started laughing and he held out his hand and I showed me that brilliant and glorious wound and then He motioned to my hand, and He had me hold it out and I held out my hand, and I saw the very same wound.

What if every wound is orchestrated by God?

What if every one of your wounds is an invitation from Jesus to share his glory?

What if my every complaint to God is really a complaint that He's giving me his glory?

What if God let's me experience his dream and taste his kingdom and then takes it away and picks at the wound, hoping that I wouldn't quit but that I'd be willing to bleed, that I'd be willing to love just as He has loved me.

Do you realize that every wound can be his wound, or maybe is his wound, if in fact you are his body. He bears your wounds.

You see I don't know how much of that wound I saw on my hand was my own fault. I don't know how much of it was my own fault. I don't know how much of it was somebody else's fault. But if I give that wound to Christ as confession over my own sin, or forgiveness over someone else's sin, or confusion over which is which, or if I give the wound to Christ, well then it's Christ's wound and it's my wound. We share the wound and the wound bleeds love.

What if God gave you a family, gave you some friends, put you in a marriage, even sent you to church in the hopes that you might learn to bleed for his dream— all so that you might learn to love as He loved you. And so we're made in his image and so we're prepared for ecstasy where everyone bleeds, everyone loves, everyone sings, that you

might learn to love, so even now, but for only a moment, you might sing the “Hallelujah Chorus” for some lonely consumer at the shopping mall. What if? What if?

You see, if the wounds on the Body of Christ, which is us, are his glory, well then maybe you shouldn't quit your marriage, and you shouldn't give up on your children, even though they are such a pain, and shouldn't bail on your small group even though you feel kinda insecure and raw and naked and vulnerable. And maybe you shouldn't just give up on church, 'cause just when you think they're not working, that's when they are beginning to work because you're beginning to bleed for someone else the way Jesus bled for you and do not the lie: that is not your shame; that's God's glory.

You know, most people run from relationships, just when they start to work, just when they begin to bleed, just when the glory is about to fall. Most people run from relationships. Maybe, in some sense all people run from relationships, except Jesus.

Communion

For on the night He was betrayed, given up by all, He took bread and He broke it saying, “This is my body given to you, wounded for you, take and eat it.” And in the same manner, after supper, He took the cup and He said this is the New Covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins, drink of it all of you and do it in remembrance of me. This is my body broken, the blood spilling out. This wound is bleeding for *you*. This is the glory of God. Hallelujah!

The dark cups are wine and light cups are juice. They are both Love, they are both Life. If you want him. And He wants you. We invite you to come forward, tear off a piece of the bread, dip it in the cups and worship him. And yeah, this world hurts, but don't be afraid, don't give up, your sorrow will turn into joy. Remember He just told his disciples that. Your mourning will turn into dancing—really, really, great dancing. This scattered messed up world will turn into the “Hallelujah Chorus”—a new heaven and a new Earth, and Glory will fill all things.

In Jesus Name,

That's the gospel.

Believe the gospel.

Ingest the gospel,

And become the gospel. Amen.

[A few worship songs are sung.]

Benediction

“You make all things work together for my good.”

So do you believe that? Really? Even your wounds? Because here's some painful news. In this world you will be wounded. That's just a given, okay? Whether you are a follower of Christ or not a follower of Christ, you'll be wounded. More and more and more wounds until a really big one called death.

Here's the great news: Every wound is a doorway. Every wound is an invitation. Everyone wound is a school, the school of Love. And so you can hide your wounds and cherish your wounds and let no one touch your wounds. And if you do, it turns into hell. The wound becomes hell. It festers and becomes hell. Or you can surrender your wounds to Jesus and surrendering them may look like confession. It may look like forgiveness. It may look like a variety of things, but if you surrender them to Jesus, you'll bleed love.

As I was preaching this morning, as we were journeying through this sermon, you probably began to think of some wounds:

"Man, she hurt me."

"He really hurt me."

"My kids hurt me."

"My mom or my dad hurt me."

Or maybe, "I hurt them."

Well, you know, if that other person is a believer, that's called church, and according to the scripture we just read, He wants us to "be one" so that the whole world can "be one," so even if they are not a believer, they could potentially be church and that wound is an opportunity; it's a doorway.

So, if you would, let's just take a moment, and offer our wounds to Jesus. Just close your eyes. Now there was some great theologian that said, "If you imagine what's true, that's called faith." I think that's right, because you're believing what is reality. And Jesus told us that He's here. He's right here, and you're here, and you know that you have wounds.

What's troubling you? Do you have it?

Now I want you to say this quietly in your heart, after me. You don't have to say it out loud but thinking of that wound just say, "Lord Jesus, I give you my wound."

Now do you realize that that wound is on his body?

That's what Isaiah says: "*He has borne our wounds and carried our sorrows and with his stripes we are healed,*" and you are his body so seeing that, surrender that wound and let him bleed love. Let him bleed forgiveness. Let him bleed confession. Let him bleed compassion. Let him bleed mercy. Let him even bleed hope. I think that maybe one of the hardest things to bleed, to hope is painful. But bleed in hope, for the sorrow turns into laughter, the mourning turns into dancing; and He is the one who turns it all into the "Hallelujah Chorus."

And now I think He has this to say to you: You are not a failure, you're my glory! In Jesus' Name may you believe the goodness, and the grace, and the glory of our Lord, the Good News. Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.